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1972/01/10

PRIVACY CHANNEL TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE January 10, 1972

ACTION: THE WHITE HOUSE

0009

EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY FOR HENRY A. KISSINGER FROM BUNKER

REF: A) Your letter of January 1, 1972 with enclosure; B) WHS 2002

1. I saw Thieu this evening and went over with him the negotiating proposal which the President would plan to present publicly, probably in a speech on the night of January 18. I showed him the text of the proposal and informed him that this had been presented to the other side before the aborted November 20 meeting. ^{This} ~~and that this~~ had been done in order to assure that the initial meeting would be productive rather than merely a session at which the other side would have to refer it to Hanoi for instructions, thus losing weeks of time.

2. I then went over the proposal with him paragraph by paragraph.

He raised a number of points:

a) What would the new dates in paragraphs 1 and 2 be?

I replied that these would be adjusted to provide for withdrawal and release of prisoners seven months after signing of the statement of principles.

b) What form would the President's presentation take?

Thieu said he felt it important that we should concert on the manner and form of presentation, indicating close consultation and agreement by both governments.

AMB:EBunker:ek
1/10/72. /s

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
State Dept. Guidelines
By KBH, NARA, Date 6/2/99

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- c) Thieu expressed some surprise that the proposal had been already submitted to the other side and asked what his response should be if he is asked how the proposal was presented. I think we will need to work out some form which will clear him from criticism that this was done without his prior knowledge. General Haig assured him that it would not be presented to the other side without his being informed.
- d) As I feared he might, he found some trouble with the provision for the adoption of a "foreign policy of neutrality". He felt that this would give him a problem here in view of his frequent statements opposing neutrality for South Viet-Nam. He asked how neutrality would be defined and expressed fear, which he has mentioned a good many times, that it will be interpreted differently by the communists than by us or other free world countries. It had not worked in Laos or Cambodia. I pointed out the provision for international guarantees under paragraph 8.
- e) How do we envisage steps to be taken after public presentation of the proposal?
- f) He asked whether we could not be less specific, confining ourselves rather to a statement of principles. I replied that

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we had both made statements of principles a good many times and that in order to achieve the effects we wished we would have to be specific about our proposals.

3. I informed him I would present these concerns to you and would try to get him a reply as soon as possible. He said that he would like to give the proposal further study. While it does not differ from that presented by General Haig it is more specific in spelling out the details.

4. I pointed out to him that the great merit of the proposal from the point of the GVN was contained in the provisions of paragraphs 4 through 8. While he had said he would remove himself as a candidate if peace were restored it was not necessary for him to indicate that he would not be a candidate in the election, but only to go along with the text of paragraph 3.

5. I think it is important in making the proposal public that we should indicate that there has been full prior consultation and agreement on the part of both governments.

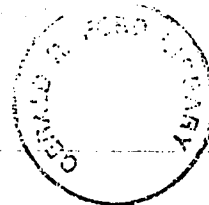
6. I will appreciate views on above points and will go back to Thieu promptly as soon as I receive your comments.

7. Warm regards.

BUNKER

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